What is claimed is:

~~CLAIMS~~

1. A process for the production of alkoxylated carboxylic acid esters by reacting alkylene oxides containing 2 to 4 carbon atoms in the presence of a basic catalyst, characterized in that a mixture of sodium and potassium compounds from the group of hydroxides, oxides, carbonates, alcoholates and carboxylates in a ratio by weight of sodium to potassium compounds of 20:1 to 1:20 is used as the basic catalyst.

2. A process as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the sodium and potassium compounds are used in a mixing ratio of 10:1 to 1:10 and preferably 1:1 to 1:5.

3. A process as claimed in claim 1 or 2, characterized in that sodium alcoholates, preferably sodium methylate, are used in admixture with potassium hydroxide, potassium alcoholates and/or potassium carboxylates.

4. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that sodium hydroxide is used in admixture with potassium hydroxide, potassium alcoholates and/or potassium carboxylates, preferably potassium hydroxide, potassium methylate, potassium butylate and/or potassium acetate.

5. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the catalyst mixture is used in quantities of 0.2 to 5% by weight, based on alkoxylated carboxylic acid ester.

6. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that esters of C_{6-22} carboxylic acids and C_{1-22} monoalcohols or with polyols containing 2 to 6 hydroxyl groups and 2 to 32 carbon atoms, more particularly methyl esters of C_{6-22} carboxylic acids, are used as the carboxylic acid esters.

7. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that ethylene oxide is used as the alkylene oxide.

8. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7, characterized in that

the carboxylic acid esters and alkylene oxides are used in a molar ratio of 1:1 to 1:40.

9. A process as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8, characterized in that the reaction is carried out under autogenous pressure at temperatures in the range from 100 to 180°C and preferably at temperatures in the range from 160 to 180°C.

10. The use of the alkoxylated carboxylic acid esters obtained by the process claimed in claims 1 to 9 as a surfactant for the production of laundry detergents, dishwashing detergents and cleaners.